

# Political Sign Information

Washington State Department of Transportation Letter

Mason County

Mason County Code Chapter 17.05 section 17.05.025 Temporary Signs

City of Shelton

Municipal Code Chapter 20.38.100 Temporary Signs



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**Dear Candidate:**

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) wishes to take this opportunity to advise political candidates about the placement of campaign signs and placards along state highways.

Revised code of Washington (RCW) 47.42, the Highway Advertising Control Act, regulates signing on Interstate highways, Primary highways, and highways that are part of the Scenic and Recreational system. Signs erected on private property adjacent to these highways must comply with the Highway Advertising Control Act, rules contained in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 468-66, and applicable local agency sign codes.

In accordance with WAC 468-66-050, ***Sign Classifications and Specific Provisions***, temporary political campaign signs are identified and regulated as a type of on-premise sign intended to express a property owner's endorsement of a political candidate or initiative. Prior to placing signs, WSDOT recommends checking with the property owner for approval, and to determine property line locations. Campaign signs are allowed under the following regulations:

- 1) Temporary political campaign signs are limited to a maximum size of thirty-two square feet
- 2) Temporary political campaign signs must be removed within ten days following the election
- 3) Sign installers must have permission of the underlying property owner prior to placing signs
- 4) Temporary political campaign signs are subject to all other applicable provisions of RCW 47.42 and WAC 468-66 that pertain to Type 3 on-premise signs

In addition to the above restrictions, **the erection of temporary political campaign signs within the right-of-way of all state highways is prohibited. Accordingly, signs placed within the right-of-way of any state highway are subject to removal by the Washington State Department of Transportation.**

Also, RCW 47.36.180(1) states in part that it is unlawful to erect any structure, sign, or device visible from a city street, county road, or state highway that simulates any directional, warning, or danger sign likely to be mistaken for such a sign. Therefore, a campaign sign cannot be designed in a manner that resembles an official traffic control sign.

If you should have any questions about the placement of campaign signs along state highways, please contact Pat O'Leary at (360) 705-7296 or [olearyp@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:olearyp@wsdot.wa.gov)

We sincerely hope that candidates for public office will observe the laws and regulations enacted to limit driver distraction and protect and preserve the roadside beauty of our state. Thank you in advance for your courtesy in this matter.

***Washington State Department of Transportation***

## **Mason County**

### **17.05.025 – Temporary Signs**

Temporary signs are those signs associated with a particular event or short-term activity such as, but not limited to; agricultural or garage sales signs, grand opening displays, festival, carnival or parade signs, political signs and real estate signs, which are to be removed within ten days when the event or activity ends. Temporary signs are allowed in all rural areas of the county and the Shelton. UGA subject to the following limitations:

- A.) Signs shall not be placed within the county right-of-way unless otherwise approved with a road-use permit from the public works department, and with adjacent property owner's permission, except as allowed under section 17.03.202(a)
- B.) Signs shall not be posted in a manner or location that may cause visual obstruction or a visual safety hazard for traffic especially in and around intersections, driveways and other access points.
- C.) It shall be the responsibility of the owner to remove a temporary sign within ten days after such sign is no longer serving its purpose including, but not limited to; the end of an event, meeting, festival, carnival or parade; the sale, lease, or rent of property; the end of an annual election cycle; the end of any type of sale.
- D.) County officials shall have the authority to remove signs when not placed in accordance with this section.

Note: More information regarding rules for signs may be found in Mason County Ordinance Number 134-08 and Mason County Code and Development Regulations Title 17.

## City of Shelton Municipal Code

### 20.38.100 Temporary Signs

The following signs are classified as temporary (nonpermanent). Temporary signs are permitted subject to the following applicable limitations:

- A.) Construction Signs. No permit is required. Construction signs are for display of information pertaining to activity on a single parcel of land only. Such signs may be displayed only after a building permit is obtained and during the period of construction on the construction site. Construction signs must be removed within seven days of first occupancy of the structure.
- B.) Grand Opening Displays, Going Out of Business Sales, Special Event Signs. Temporary sign permit is required. Temporary signs, posters, banners, strings of lights, clusters of flags, balloons or other air or gas filled figures, and searchlights are permitted for a period of fifteen days only to announce the opening of a completely new enterprise or the opening of an enterprise under new management, sales associated with the closing of a business, or special sales. All such materials shall be removed immediately upon the expiration of fifteen days or at the end of the event, whichever is sooner. Such displays are permitted only in districts where the enterprise so advertised is allowed under district zoning regulations. Searchlights may be permitted by any business or enterprise provided the beam of light does not flash against any building or does not sweep an arc lower than forty-five degrees from vertical. Each parcel of land, or in the case of multitenant parcels, each business premises, shall be allowed a maximum of two temporary sign permits per calendar year.
- C.) Real Estate Signs. No sign permit is required. All exterior real estate signs must be of wood or plastic or other durable material. Such signs may be used only during the period that the specified real estate opportunity actually exists. The permitted signs, with applicable limits, are as follows:
  - 1.) Residential “for sale” and “sold” signs: such signs shall be limited to one sign per street frontage not to exceed five square feet in sign area, placed wholly on the property for sale, and not to exceed a height of six feet;
  - 2.) Residential directional “open house” signs: such signs shall be limited to one sign per street frontage on the premises for sale and three off-premises signs. However, if a realtor has more than one house open for inspection in a single development or subdivision, he/she is limited to four off-premises “open house” signs in the entire development or subdivision. Such signs are permitted only during daylight hours and when the realtor or seller or an agent is in

attendance at the property for sale. No such sign shall exceed five and five-tenths square feet in sign area. The sign must be placed on private property within one mile of the subject residential development;

- 3.) Undeveloped commercial and industrial property “for sale or rent” signs: one sign per street frontage advertising undeveloped commercial and industrial property for sale or rent. The sign shall not exceed thirty-two square feet in sign area and seven feet in height;
- 4.) Developed commercial and industrial property “for sale or rent” signs: one sign per street frontage advertising a commercial or industrial building for rent or sale is permitted. If a face of the building is less than fifteen feet from the property line, the sign shall be placed on the building or in a window. If freestanding, the sign shall be located more than fifteen feet from any abutting property line and a public right-of-way line. The sign shall not exceed seven feet in height. Said sign shall not exceed thirty-two square feet in sign area;
- 5.) Undeveloped residential property “for sale” signs: one sign per street frontage advertising undeveloped residential property for sale is permitted not exceeding sixteen square feet in sign area. Said sign must be placed more than ten feet from the abutting owner’s property line and may not exceed a height of five feet.

D.) Political Signs. No sign permit is required. Political signs or posters may be placed only upon private property with owner’s consent. Signs in the residential zones, which includes neighborhood residential (NR), and professional office/residential mix (PR-A) zones, shall not exceed ten square feet in sign area. Signs placed in the commercial and industrial zones, which includes the downtown (DT), general commercial (GC), commercial residential valley (CR-V), commercial residential Goose Lake (CR-G), low-intensity mixed use (MU), low-intensity commercial (LI-C), medical educational (ME), commercial industrial (CI) and the industrial (I) zones shall not exceed thirty-two square feet in sign area. The signs shall not exceed six feet in height. Signs shall not be posted or attached to trees, telephone poles, power poles or other public utility facilities. It is unlawful to place, erect or maintain any political sign so as to pose a visibility hazard to pedestrian or motor vehicle traffic along streets, sidewalks, or street corners. Political signs shall be removed within seven days after the election in which the candidate or issue advertised on a sign has been determined. For a successful candidate in a primary election, the sign may remain until the final election, but shall be removed within seven days after the election. The candidate or committee for which the sign is displayed shall be responsible for its removal and subject to the penalties as provided in this chapter.

E.) Semi-Annual Event Signs. A temporary sign permit is required and evidence of such permit shall be affixed to the sign in a manner determined by the city. Semi-annual event signs rights-of-way, semi-annual event signs shall be no taller than forty-two inches, no larger than four square feet on a one-sided sign, and no larger than eight square feet on a multi-sided sign. Sign supports may not be installed in the ground, except that in areas with no formal landscaping or underground sprinkler systems a maximum two-inch by two-inch stake may be driven no more than six inches into the ground. Larger signs may be permitted on public property or in the right-of-way subject to public works department approval under a right-of-way use permit, pursuant to the criteria and conditions set forth in city commission Resolution No. 797-0103. In no case may semi-annual event signs be located on any street pavement or sidewalk, and they shall not be attached to any tree, utility pole, or other public structure or fixture (e.g., light pole, street sign, street bench, trash container, mail box, etc.). No semi-annual event sign shall be placed in or within fifty feet of a public park, unless such sign refers to an event located in a public park. No more than four signs are allowed per event and they shall be displayed no more than one week before the event and twenty-four hours after the event. (Ord. 1661-1105 § 4, 2005: Ord. 1576-1002 § 1, 2002: Ord. 1570-0702 § 1 (part), 2002: Ord. 1418-295 § 1 (part), 1995)